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ABSTRACT

The attendance patterns of the 5,697 nongraduating students enrolled at the Grand Valley State Colleges over the period from fall 1975 to fall 1977 is examined. The analysis shows that: of the 256 possible combinations of attendance patterns over the eight terms from winter 1976 to fall 1977, nongraduating students were in 187 of these patterns; only 17.8 percent of the 5,697 nongraduates who were enrolled in fall 1975 had not returned by fall 1977; 11.4 percent of these original students followed the academic pattern of attending fall, winter, and spring while staying out during the summer; 15.8 percent of the students who were not in attendance for two consecutive terms did re-enroll for at least one term by fall 1977; and of the 1,463 nongraduates enrolled in fall 1975, who did not re-enroll in winter 1976, 30.6 percent eventually enrolled for at least one term between spring 1976 and fall 1977. (SPG)

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Attendance Patterns of Non-Graduating Students: Fall 1975 to Fall 1977

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Office of Institutional Analysis
R. Bruce Tweddale

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Report #87

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Highlights

This report examines the attendance patterns of students enrolled Fall, 1975, over the period from Fall, 1975, to Fall, 1977. Those students enrolled Fall, 1975, who have graduated during this time period have been deleted from the study so that we can examine the "comings and goings" of the group without counting those normally permanent leavers. Therefore, the group under study will be referred to as the "non-graduates."

- There are 256 possible combinations of attendance patterns over the eight terms from Winter, 1976, to Fall, 1977. We actually had non-graduating students in 187 of these patterns.
- Of the 5,697 non-graduates through Fall, 1977, who were enrolled Fall, 1975, only 17.8%.(1,016) were in attendance Fall, 1975, and have not returned since that time.
- Of the 5,697 non-graduating students enrolled Fall, 1975, only 650 (11.4%) followed the "normal" academic pattern of attending Fall, Winter, and Spring while staying out Summer over the two year period of this study.
- 15.8% of the non-graduating students who were not in attendance for two consecutive terms did re-enroll for at least one term by Fall, 1977.
- Of the 1,463 non-graduates enrolled Fall, 1975, who did not re-enroll Winter, 1976, 30.6% (447) eventually re-enrolled for at least one term between Spring, 1976, and Fall, 1977.

Background

A previous report by the Office of Institutional Analysis entitled Attendance Patterns: Fall 1975 to Fall 1976 (Report #67) previously dealt with this same group of students--namely those students who were enrolled Fall, 1975. That report dealt with the attendance patterns of non-graduating students who were enrolled Fall, 1975, over the five term period from Fall, 1975, to Fall, 1976.

This report now also deals with those students who were enrolled Fall, 1975, except that it has been extended over the 1976-77 year. Thus, we can look at the attendance patterns from Fall, 1975, through Fall, 1977.

As with the previous study, students enrolled Fall, 1975, who have graduated during the time period under study have been deleted so that we can examine the "comings and goings" without counting these normally permanent leavers.

This deletion of graduates prompts two cautions to the reader of this report. First, comparisons of results of this report with Report #67 cannot be made. In Report #67 we dealt with a base of 6,566 non-graduates enrolled Fall, 1975 (7,341-775 graduates). In this report we are dealing with a base of 5,697 non-graduates (7,341-1,644 graduates). Secondly, figures in this report should not be construed as being "true" term to term attrition figures since those students who enrolled Fall, 1975, are only a sample which we are following over time.

Results

A. Attendance as a Function of Fall, 1975, Enrollment:

Attachment #1 gives the overall attendance, by college, of the 5,697 non-graduates enrolled Fall, 1975, over the subsequent eight (8) terms.

The percentages of the original Fall, 1975, group in enrollment during each subsequent term was:

Winter, 1976 - 74.3%
Spring, 1976 - 60.2%
Summer, 1976 - 19.0%
Fall, 1976 - 46.6%
Winter, 1977 - 42.5%
Spring, 1977 - 40.0%
Summer, 1977 - 16.8%
Fall, 1977 - 31.6%

B. "Stop Outs":

One is tempted to look at the data in section A and jump to unwarrented conclusions. For instance, one could assume that we "lost" 25.7% of the group after Fall, 1975. This is not the case. Only 17.8%, or 1016, were here Fall, 1975, and did not attend any other term since then.

Data on Attachment #2 illustrates this "Stop-Out" phenomenon for regular academic year terms.

We find that of the 1,463 students enrolled Fall, 1975, who were not in attendance Winter, 1976, 30.6% eventually re-enrolled for at least one term between Spring, 1976, and Fall, 1977. In other words, 31% were "stop-outs" and were not lost to GVSC.

The percentage for those enrolled Winter, 1976, who were not enrolled Spring, 1976, and subsequently returned for at least one term is 33.1%. However, when we move to those enrolled Spring, 1976, but not Fall, 1976, the percentage who subsequently re-enrolled dropped to 20.5%. For those who were here Fall, 1976, and not here Winter, 1977, the percentage re-enrolling climbed back to 37.5%.

One might conclude from this data that GVSC is likely to have about one-third of the drop-outs after Fall and Winter terms return for some subsequent term. Those who are here Spring and do not return for Fall are less likely to ultimately return than those leaving after Fall or Winter terms.

How does the length of the "stop-out" relate to coming back to GVSC? The figures below indicate that a goodly number of the 5,697 students in this study dropped out for more than one term and then returned.

Number of Consecutive Not Enrolled and Then Subsequently Re-Enrolled

# terms out	# students
2	358
3	203
4	108
5	16
6	1
	686

We had a total of 4,340 students out of our group of 5,697 who were not in attendance two or more consecutive terms. In other words, 15.8% (686/4,340) of those who were absent for two or more consecutive terms did re-enroll for at least one term by the Fall of 1977.

C. Enrollment Patterns:

All of the students in this study were in attendance Fall, 1975. Some were then in attendance Winter, 1976, and some were not--and so on through Fall, 1977. Mathematically, there are 256 possible combinations of attendance patterns over the eight terms from Winter, 1976, to Fall, 1977. The great diversity of the attendance patterns of students at GVSC is evident in the fact that we actually had one or more students in 187 different patterns out of the 256 which are possible.

The 187 different patterns exhibited by this group is too voluminous to put in chart format. However, the following statements give some of the

more interesting aspects of looking at the attendance patterns of the 5,697 students from Fall, 1975, to Fall, 1977.

1. 246 (4.3%) were in attendance all nine terms.
2. Only 650 (11.4%) are following the "normal" academic pattern of attending Fall, Winter, and Spring while staying out Summer term.
3. Only 1,016 (17.8%) were here Fall, 1975, and have not attended any other term through Fall, 1977.
4. 508 (8.9%) were in attendance Fall, 1975, and Winter, 1976, and have not been back since.
5. We actually had one student who was here Fall, 1975, and disappeared for six whole terms who again re-enrolled Fall, 1977.
6. We have 3 students in an every-other term pattern.

What Next?

The "tracking file" consisting of all students enrolled during Fall, 1975, will continue to be updated with each current term's attendance data. This will give us an ever increasing span of time over which to review attendance patterns. By the Summer of 1979 we will have a full four years' worth of data and can then look at such things as the percentage of students graduating after four years and the amount of progress made by those who have not graduated.

Attachment #1

Attendance of Non-Graduates Enrolled Fall 1975
Winter 1976 to Fall 1977
(Numbers in parentheses are % of those enrolled Fall 1975)

	F'75	W'76		Sp'76		Su'76		F'76	
CAS	3,158	2,652	(84.0%)	2,356	(74.6%)	591	(18.7%)	1,758	(55.7%)
TJC	440	349	(79.3%)	286	(65.0%)	107	(24.3%)	186	(42.3%)
WJC	525	439	(83.6%)	383	(73.0%)	110	(21.0%)	272	(51.8%)
CIV	82	68	(82.9%)	40	(48.8%)	34	(41.5%)	38	(46.3%)
SGC	134	90	(67.2%)	80	(59.7%)	35	(26.1%)	60	(44.8%)
DSI	126	94	(74.6%)	78	(61.9%)	28	(22.2%)	41	(32.5%)
CED	1,182	508	(43.0%)	431	(36.5%)	163	(13.8%)	279	(23.6%)
CGS	50	33	(66.0%)	32	(64.0%)	14	(28.0%)	21	(42.0%)
Total	5,697	4,233	(74.3%)	3,428	(60.2%)	1,082	(19.0%)	2,655	(46.6%)

	W'77		Sp'77		Su'77		F'77	
CAS	1,618	(51.2%)	1,504	(47.6%)	548	(17.4%)	1,228	(38.9%)
TJC	180	(40.9%)	166	(37.7%)	77	(17.5%)	127	(28.9%)
WJC	248	(47.2%)	240	(45.7%)	115	(21.9%)	179	(34.1%)
CIV	33	(40.2%)	35	(42.7%)	20	(24.4%)	24	(29.3%)
SGC	52	(38.8%)	53	(39.6%)	25	(18.7%)	47	(35.1%)
DSI	39	(31.0%)	38	(30.2%)	23	(18.3%)	29	(23.0%)
CED	240	(20.3%)	224	(19.0%)	130	(11.0%)	156	(13.2%)
CGS	14	(28.0%)	20	(40.0%)	17	(34.0%)	10	(20.0%)
Total	2,424	(42.5%)	2,280	(40.0%)	955	(16.8%)	1,800	(31.6%)

Attachment #2

Number Returning After Missing a Regular Term
(Base group - 5,697 non-graduates through Summer 1977
who were enrolled Fall 1975)

Enrolled	Regular Term Missed	Re-enrolled After Term Missed through Fall 1977?			
		Yes		No	
		#	%	#	%
Fall 1975	Winter 1976	447	30.6%	1,016	69.4%
Winter 1976	Spring 1976	251	33.1%	508	66.9%
Spring 1976	Fall 1976	265	20.5%	1,028	79.5%
Fall 1976	Winter 1977	170	37.5%	283	62.5%
Winter 1977	Spring 1977	107	29.6%	254	70.4%